

Bureau of Family Services

Questions and Answers:

Isn't this plan going to eliminate services?

No. Unlike previous early retirement reorganizations within this bureau, this plan does not eliminate any services, nor are there any plan for "extending" licenses, eliminating interim inspections or going to non-expiring licenses. In actuality, the quality of services will be increased because staff will be responsible for only one role and will be able to concentrate on ensuring that inspections and investigations are conducted in a timely manner.

Licensees count on the relationship they have with their consultant. Now they don't know who will be coming out. How can that be a good thing?

It is true that with this plan, consultants do not have a specific caseload, and different consultants will be interacting with licensees. Rather than negative, this is a positive aspect. Currently, most licensees see their consultant once a year unless a complaint is received. In most instances, this is not much of a "relationship." Having different consultants interact with licensees provides a type of quality assurance in the enforcement of regulations. For licensees who request technical assistance or consultation, an entire unit is dedicated to providing that assistance.

What about consultation? Isn't that why we have consultants?

Licensing consultants are required to have at least a master's degree. Many do have additional experience. The plan does not take that away, only focuses them on to one particular part of the job. A highly educated person is not necessary to intake complaints or to address the paper process of license applications. By assigning those functions to other staff, consultants are able to handle the functions for which they were trained.

What about our files? If there aren't caseloads, how do we know where things are located?

The master files for licensing and disciplinary action will be maintained in Central Office. A central repository will eliminate the need to contact field offices every time there is a FOIA request for a licensing or disciplinary file. Additionally, files will be set up and maintained consistently, something that is not currently the situation.

How will people know whom to call with questions?

If the call pertains to license applications, renewals or administrative rules, contact the Licensing Division; if it pertains to on site inspections, training, consultation, or variances, contact the Consultation and Training Division; if it pertains to a complaint, investigation or disciplinary action, that division can be contacted. Of course, Central Office is always available to respond to questions or direct calls.

Staff are experts in programs. Why change their functions?

Because 40 % of the bureau is retiring and the way things were formerly done won't work any more. Our enabling statutes don't mandate certain actions only where fully staffed. We are always required to do them. This is a different way of getting the job done.

**The bureau has been understaffed for a long time and not able to meet all out objectives.
How can this possibly work?**

The new bureau database has provided valuable information in the analysis of workload. By eliminating many of the time consuming functions that don't require a consultant's expertise, and focusing consultants on one particular function, they will easily be able to complete the tasks assigned. Simply put, this is a much more efficient process.

What about our customers?

We are still there for our customers. In fact, we will be there more promptly because we will have the option of assigning inspections or investigations to available staff, rather than based on a person's caseload.

This is going to confuse everyone.

Any change results in some confusion. Because consultant and management staff are professionals, they will easily acclimate to this process. Managers are managers and will be able to respond to consultant questions. Again, Central Office is available to provide assistance.